

HONORING MOUNT ZION  
MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 25, 2014*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church Canton, Mississippi.

The population of Madison County, Mississippi has been predominantly African-American since 1840. Prior to 1865, some members of the African-American population, most of whom had arrived in the county as slaves, were permitted to attend worship services, to be baptized and to be married in the area churches. They were also allowed to join established white congregations.

Early county records indicate that slaves were a part of the church communities. The Old Madison Presbyterian Church, the First Presbyterian, and the First Baptist listed a total membership of one hundred and thirty-four. One hundred were slaves and the other thirty-four were whites.

After the Civil War and freedom, African-Americans naturally desired to establish their own houses of worship. In 1865, the newly freed members of the congregation of First Baptist, with encouragement and financial assistance from their white counterparts, organized Mount Zion Baptist Church. Rev. T. J. Drane, pastor of the white church, served as minister receiving for his services a monthly salary of one dollar.

In 1870, Drane and R. B. Johnson donated two acres of land on the northern boundary of the plantation to Mount Zion. The first church was erected on Freedman Hill, located at the corner of North Railroad and Bowman Streets, according to the 1898 George and Dunlap map of Canton. Rev. Drane called for a meeting with council along with Mr. Will Powell from the white Baptist Church to help establish the church.

In addition to serving as pastor, Rev. Drane ran a day school and was assisted by Lillian Highgate, a white female. Rev. Drane received an additional \$1.50 a month for his services. He also organized and maintained the first Sunday school class. All other organizations came into existence after Rev. Drane's resignation. Rev. Jordan Williams replaced him.

Newspapers frequently carried announcements concerning Mount Zion's activities. For example, "Several converts at the Colored Baptist Church were baptized at the railroad culvert," or "Rev. Williams, pastor of the Colored Baptist Church, immersed ten converts last Sunday night". The second church site was across the street where the TWL parking lot is now located.

The third and fourth pastors were Reverends Mass and Davis. The fifth pastor, Rev. R.T. Sims, served for eighteen years and Rev. W. L. Varnado for seven. The seventh through the tenth pastors were as follows: Rev. Bradley, Rev. Morris, Rev. Drew, and Rev. A. D. Purnell.

By the 1920's, the congregation had outgrown the church and Rev. Purnell, along with members, began raising money for a larger building. The new lot for our present church was purchased from Jack Warren. Rev. Purnell asked Mr. S. M. Reddick, Vice President of Madison County Bank, to serve as

custodian over the church's building funds. He also asked if he would direct the building of the church and issue bonds to underwrite construction costs.

The bank issue \$14,000 in bonds. Raymond H. Spencer was the architect of the neoclassical brick structure. He also designed the First Methodist Church of which Reddick was a member. The building was erected in 1929 at the cost of \$35,000. The congregation moved into the new structure February 1930.

Rev. P. F. Parker, the eleventh pastor, with the help of God and members, burned the mortgage. Under his leadership the church grew. For example, the following organizations played an active role in missionary work: Senior Missionary Society, Junior Matrons, Young Woman's Auxiliary, Red Circle/Sunshine Band, Sunday school, Baptist Training Union, Senior Choir, Gospel Chorus, Junior/Beginner's Choir, New Membership Club, Pastor's Aide, Boys' Bible Club and Usher Board. Rev. Parker served until his death in 1970.

Mount Zion continued to serve the African-American community religiously and socially. During the summer of 1964, Mount Zion was the location of a pivotal moment in our state's civil rights struggle. In her autobiography, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Ann Moody notes that Mount Zion was the biggest Negro church in Canton and the center of the local marches.

On Friday, May 29, 1964, on the church lawn, six hundred community and church members witnessed the near death beating of McKinley Hamilton, a young African-American man. As a result, eighty church members marched on the Madison County jail in one of the first protest marches in Canton. Mount Zion became known as the "Church of Refuge". In 1968, twelve hundred students from Rogers High School marched because they were outraged over the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. A group of parents led them to Mount Zion. Rev. Parker opened the doors of the church to them, thus saving them from injury by law enforcement officers waiting for them on Hickory Street in front of High's Funeral Home.

Dr. W. L. Johnson, our twelfth and present pastor, has served for twenty-nine years. His words have power through the Holy Spirit. Under Dr. Johnson's leadership, the church has continued its growth. For example, the church has been air-conditioned, carpeted throughout, a fellowship hall and recreation center built and equipped, four parking lots purchased and surfaced, restrooms were remodeled, a lounge installed, pews padded, a new intercom system purchased, speakers installed in the pulpit and choir loft, additional chairs purchased for the choir and seating areas in the wings, two new copiers, a computer, storage room, and a fifteen passenger van and twenty-seven passenger bus were also purchased. The stained glass windows were repaired, and the pastor study was moved upstairs.

We now have a summer recreation program. Our membership is approximately 500 and still growing. The church is one of the most monumental, intact, and historic resources associated with the Canton African-American Community. As a result of this, the church was recently placed on the registry of Historical Buildings.

Our aim is to give every God-seeking person an opportunity to receive salvation. The

church clearly reflects the importance of the social and religious life of the African-American community from its birth in 1865 up to the present. Let us resolve to make service to Christ a priority in our lives.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church.

HONORING THE 25TH ANNUAL  
BRONX DOMINICAN DAY PARADE

**HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 25, 2014*

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to the Bronx Dominican Day Parade (La Gran Parada Dominicana del Bronx) which will take place on Sunday, July 27th, 2014. This is the 25th year of this important community event, which celebrates the heritage and culture of the Dominican community in New York City. It is one that is eagerly anticipated by the Dominican and Bronx communities each year.

As the second largest Latino community in New York City, Dominicans have made invaluable contributions to New York City, and to the Bronx in particular. While Northern Manhattan is perhaps best known for their large Dominican community, I am proud to say that Census Bureau statistics now show that the Bronx is home to the largest Dominican community in New York City. And I am even prouder to represent a community has enriched our borough with a unique culture, spirit, and drive to live the American Dream.

The Dominican community is an important part of the diverse tapestry that makes up New York City. Thousands of Dominican professionals and students have served as community leaders in the Bronx in many different areas, including government, law, media, science, and technology, and sports, among many other fields. Their contributions to the culture and success of the Bronx, New York City, and to the United States is worthy of celebration and immense pride.

The Bronx Dominican Day Parade is an exceptional event that brings together the diversity of New York City, where Dominicans and those of other heritages can gather to celebrate the successes and identity of one of the city's most important communities. The parade was created to honor the vibrant Dominican community in the Bronx, and Felipe Febles and Rosa Ayala, the parade's organizers, have worked hard to make the event the extraordinary celebration that it is today. The strong sense of unity that the parade brings to the Bronx is immeasurably important. As a Bronxite and New Yorker, I am delighted to see this event grow every year, and I am honored to march alongside the accomplished Dominican men and women in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I always look forward to this fantastic community event, and I am excited to marching in the twenty-fifth annual Bronx Dominican Day Parade on Sunday. I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing this important occasion, and I am confident that this event will continue to be a landmark celebration for both the Dominican and Bronx communities for many years to come.

JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY POLICE OFFICER MELVIN SANTIAGO

### HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2014

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, when danger occurs, when disaster happens, when 911 is called, it is the first responders who heed the emergencies.

While most of us flee danger, the men and women who are the thin blue line head toward danger.

They are America's finest.

They are the peace officers.

Officer Melvin Santiago was just 23 when he was gunned down and assassinated for sport by a fugitive, an outlaw.

Santiago was going about his duties as a Jersey City, New Jersey police officer responding to a disturbance at a local drugstore.

When he arrived he was shot multiple times before even exiting his patrol car.

The name of the cold blooded killer who murdered rookie Jersey City police officer, Melvin Santiago shall not be mentioned.

This cowardly murderer thought he would become famous by killing a cop.

The gunman was lying in wait to murder a peace officer.

The criminal was killed by police.

He has gone to meet his Maker.

I doubt the meeting will be pleasant.

Officer Santiago wanted to fight crime and protect the citizens in the toughest neighborhoods.

He wanted to make a difference.

The west section of the city was where he thought he could do that best.

This was not just a job for Officer Santiago; it was a goal he had worked toward.

He excelled in his entrance exam with a score of 98.

This first responder wanted to be like his Uncle Frank, a retired detective.

Santiago looked up to his uncle and often sought his advice.

Officer Santiago graduated from the police academy in December, patrolling the area that he knew he could help turn around, when his life was stolen from him by a worthless criminal.

Law enforcement officers are a special kind.

They put their lives on the line every single day to ensure the safety of their communities.

There aren't many other professions where a person willingly puts themselves at risk on a daily basis in order to protect others.

Mr. Speaker, as a former prosecutor and criminal court judge in Texas for over 25 years, I have known a lot of men and women who have worn the badge—the shield—or the star over their heart.

These are symbols of their willingness to put our safety above theirs.

Unfortunately, I have known and attended funerals of first responders like Santiago who gave their lives in an effort to make our communities safer.

We as a society should never forget the true sacrifice first responders and their families make for our nation.

Officer Santiago went above and beyond to make his hometown of Jersey City, the state of New Jersey, and his country a better place.

Over a thousand officers joined Officer Santiago's family and friends to honor his life and lay him to rest on July 18th, where he was posthumously promoted to detective and given the Jersey City Police Department Medal of Honor.

In his short time on the squad, he quickly gained the respect of many.

We remember his hard work and commitment to family and community.

I commend Detective Melvin Santiago for his service to the people of New Jersey.

Our thoughts and prayer are with Jersey City Detective Melvin Santiago's family, the local peace officers, and the community of Jersey City.

Peace officers stand between the law and the lawless.

Peace officers are the last strand of wire in the fence between the fox and the chickens.

Mr. Speaker, peace officers are a rare breed.

Melvin Santiago was one of those individuals.

General George Patton said it quite appropriately when talking about his young troops killed in battle: While we mourn the loss of these men. We should thank the Good Lord that such men ever lived.

And that's just the way it is.

### HONORING THE DISTINGUISHED CAREER OF STEPHEN BERO AND HIS OUTSTANDING IMPACT IN THE WARREN-NEWPORT COMMUNITY

### HON. BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2014

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to honor Stephen Bero, an exceptional public servant who, for more than 20 years, worked in library administration and for the last nearly 10 served years as the Executive Director of the Warren-Newport Public Library District (WNPLD) in Gurnee, IL.

When Steve formally retires at the end of July, he will complete what has been a truly remarkable career in service to his community. During his tenure as Executive Director, Steve presided over the WNPLD during a period of remarkable growth and financial stability. Steve successfully shepherded an \$8.7 million expansion and renovation project, securing a AA+ bond rating from Standard & Poor's as well as favorable financing options that made the project possible.

In addition to his many noteworthy financial accomplishments, Steve fostered an incredibly positive environment at the library that earned the recognition and appreciation of his colleagues and the surrounding community. Steve's colleagues noted his successful leadership during the construction, along with his decision to reinstate the Youth Services department.

Under Steve's stewardship, WNPLD has become one of the most popular public libraries in all of Lake County.

In a fitting conclusion to Steve's tenure at WNPLD, the Illinois Library Association named him the 2014 Librarian of the Year. The entire Warren-Newport community is lucky to have enjoyed Steve Bero's service.

IN TRIBUTE TO JENNY CONTOIS

### HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2014

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with deep gratitude to pay tribute to a colleague, a friend, and a trusted deputy, Jenny Contois, who retired last month after serving seven and half years as my District Director in Connecticut's Second District.

Even more than a traditional District Director for a Member of the House, I considered Jenny to be a Co-Member of Congress. Whenever I was called to Washington for legislative duty, I had unshakable confidence in Jenny's abilities to handle all challenges in Connecticut. Jenny's executive experience, honed over 15 years as First Selectwoman of Colchester prepared her to lead my Connecticut office and to expand her area of responsibility from one town to 64 towns of the Second District.

Jenny combined a passionate commitment to public service with an unshakable determination to solve problems that lay before her. When it came to finding a loan for a struggling small business, securing a rural development grant for a town in need, badgering a recalcitrant federal agency to fulfill a previous obligation, or begging and borrowing to get an Army Corps boat to dredge a coastal harbor, Jenny's tenacity was unparalleled and her success rate unmatched.

At no time did Jenny shine brighter than during a crisis. Whether in the aftermath of a winter storm that left residential and commercial power lines down or in the wake of a summer storm that brought extensive flooding to our shores, Jenny rose to the challenge time and time again. Immediately after a blizzard or tempest hit, Jenny would work by my side to rally fellow municipal leaders and emergency responders to expedite the assessment and repairs. After the storms subsided, she worked painstakingly with families and businesses to help them secure the recovery funds and assistance they so desperately needed.

She accomplished all of this with a winning smile and a hearty laugh. By the time that her seven and a half years as District Director had concluded, Jenny in many ways had evolved from the First Selectwoman of Colchester to the First Selectwoman of eastern Connecticut.

This weekend, Jenny's many colleagues, friends, and family will celebrate her service to the Second District of Connecticut at a gathering in her hometown. Jenny will spend her duly earned retirement with her beloved husband Frank, her daughter Amy, and her latest arrival, her grandson Jack.

I will miss Jenny's day-to-day counsel and friendship in the future, but I am heartened and grateful to remember her invaluable assistance in launching my new office almost eight years ago and achieving the success we had together.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in saluting one of eastern Connecticut's finest, Jenny Contois.